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Happy Holidays!

From the State AE Staff



Vicki, Jim, Jan & Shirley

TEAL Update

During 2011 and 2012, a group of trainers and some members of the Adult Education State Office staff presented a series of workshops in Nebraska on TEAL (Teaching Excellence in Adult Literacy) program.

From a national meeting in the summer of 2011, the trainers went throughout the state to share the information with you. Nebraska was one of 12 states to take part in the program which featured research-based strategies for teaching writing to ABE students.

With four workshops and presentations at two Fall Adult Education Conferences, over eighty of our teachers were able to learn about the TEAL program!

We are confident that many of you are using the information garnered from the TEAL trainings to the benefit of your students but do not forget that the TEAL website is available.

Go to <https://teal.ed.gov/> to access the website. There you will find the story behind TEAL as well as the

Just Write! Guide and information on three new publications: *Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High Schools*; *Writing to Read: Evidence for How Writing Can Improve Reading*; and *Informing Writing: The Benefits of Formative Assessment*.

The site has project resources and links to other sites which will have information. Take time to refresh skills acquired through the workshops. If you did not attend the workshops, you can still get good ideas.

What Are Your Teaching Plans?

By: John W. Miller, Lead Teacher—Adult Education Program, Alliance Public Schools

What are your teaching plans for students responding to text within Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science for the 2014 GED® test preparation?

In this article, it will be my endeavor to strive to give some ideas for your lesson plans as we all begin to prepare our students for the writing embedded in textual formats in writing across the curriculum of the 2014 GED® writing samples.

During the past seven years, my plan has included having each student (regardless of being ABE or GED®) keep a writing journal. This philosophy is that a journal is a way to collect ideas and get extensive writing practice. It is a way to free imagination, try ideas that are not fully formed, and experiment to develop students' writing skills. Each day a writing idea is given for students to think about and respond to which will be similar to the 2014 GED® test.

In addition, my plan includes combining reading with writing (which is what the 2014 test will do) because the strong correlation between the two improves both skills. The 2014 GED® test will expect students to read arguments, analyze the text and give an extended response to a writer's presented argument.

This will require excellent reading skills. The more students read a variety of literature, the greater their growth in language structure will occur making them ready for this task. Good writing can be the product of the engagement with ideas from reading. The engagement of serious ideas develops through connecting reading and writing.

As students write daily in a journal, it may be a paragraph, but extensive paragraph writing enables students to move to the multi-paragraph extended responses that will be used.

All adult educators will need to teach the use of varied and precise words while writing. One good way is to expect from the first day of starting the journal that students keep a list of new words they meet while reading in preparation of an extended response from reading.



The best way is to have them put a tab 25 pages from the back of their writing journal and that is where they keep an Academic Word List. As we all know, vocabulary is a key component to reading ability; therefore explicit vocabulary improvement is a must.

Find interesting articles from any source—magazines, old textbooks, new materials, or teaching writing texts. Begin early to give them a selection to read and give them a prompt or a question over what was read. This is written in their daily journal.

For best results, the educator should read each journal, make a list of what you as the teacher need to do to help them improve or hone their writing skills. It is a lot of work, but the results and improvement will come sooner this way.

Here is the outline that we use at the Alliance Adult Education program:

In your Writing Journal: Before each reading, students write their response to a question related to the topic of the reading selection. They are encouraged to write as much as possi-

ble based on their own knowledge and experience.

Before you Read: In the first part of Before You Read, students discuss questions related to the topic of the reading selection. Questions promote students to share their knowledge, opinions, and experience related to the topic. The second part includes background information about the reading selection. Students then add new ideas to their writing journal response.

Read for the Main Idea: Students read quickly and without stopping to discover a writer's main idea. Completion of a short outline asking for the main idea and a few supporting details follows. During this reading, students mark unfamiliar words to work on in the next step.

Read for New Words: Students study AWL (Academic Word List) and self-selected unfamiliar words they will need for a more careful reading. Students interact with vocabulary in an ongoing vocabulary journal. In this step, students can make annotations next to the words in the reading selection to reinforce vocabulary learning.

This is an important step because the more students do with new vocabulary; the more likely they will retain it.

Read for Answers: Students do a more careful reading of the selection and answer literal comprehension questions. Annotations are added to the reading, again in the margins. This is a way for the reader to interact with the writer, thus increasing comprehension.

Read between the Lines: Students answer questions requiring them to understand implied meaning and understand the writer's attitudes.

Continued on page 3

What Are Your Teaching Plans? - Continued

Continued from page 2

Respond to the Reading: Students think critically and respond to questions that require them to move beyond the reading selection.

Return to Your Writing Journal: Students review their responses to the opening question and add their ideas based on the reading selection.

Here's an example of what occurred in Alliance on November 18th: Curtis McCarty spoke at the Alliance Library Community Room. He was exonerated in 2007 after serving 21 years—including 19 years on death row—for a 1982 Oklahoma City mur-

der he did not commit. McCarty was convicted twice and sentenced to death three times based on prosecutorial misconduct and bad forensics.

Narrowly escaping an execution, it was only a lucky break that allowed McCarty to prove his actual innocence. Since his release, he has worked tirelessly to support efforts to repeal the death penalty, throughout the country and around the world.

As the adult educator, I attended his talk and took notes. Upon returning to the classroom, I went to www.innocenceproject.org/Content/Curtis_McCarty.php.

I had students go to this site, read about him on the Internet and followed the above outline.

Following their reading on the Internet, the prompt became, "After reading about Curtis McCarty's conviction, write a response about the death penalty law. In your response give reasons for your opinion."

Lastly, as an adult educator, begin keeping a loose-leaf notebook of articles that will cause serious thinking and write prompts and questions as in the example in this article to get those students ready for the expectations of the 2014 GED® test.

Harnessing Technology to Engage Low-Level Learners

By: Kimberly Parsons, Adult Educator-Cargill Community Learning Center, Schuyler

As an attendee of the 2013 COABE conference, I attained valuable information to share with my fellow instructors and implement in my classroom.

One session that I found very helpful was **Harnessing Technology to Engage Low-Level Learners**, presented by Bobbie Sin. In this session we were able to explore resources and find support for the most difficult students to reach through technology. The resources are free and of high-interest to the student. Our presenter shared a vast array of websites and apps relevant to today's learner.

Of course Google was on the top of the list as a valued resource. A few helpful hints about Google: Use quotation marks to search an exact word or set of words.

And did you know if you add a dash (-) before a word or site you can exclude all results that include that word? This is especially useful for synonyms like Jaguar the car brand and jaguar the animal.

www.gcflearning.org is a wonderful tool for all of your adult learners. The website is broken down into three areas of learning: Technology, Reading and Math. The Reading area is great for ELL's. If you have a student who needs help using a computer, typing or brushing up on Math skills, this is the place for them. If you have a higher level student that struggles with keyboarding skills, www.learn2type.com is a supportive site.

As an adult educator, I am always looking for resources to support professional development. The ProLiteracy Education Network is a website I have found helpful in my quest for fresh teaching strategies, classroom activities, and up to date research in best practices. Find this information at www.proliteracyednet.org.

This website also has low level, high interest stories and interactive activities for students. Some lessons include audio and video. Many of our students may not have computers or tablets at home, but most have smartphones. Apps shared in

the COABE presentation that were relevant to our learners were: ScreenChomp, BOB books, Penultimate and Storykit.

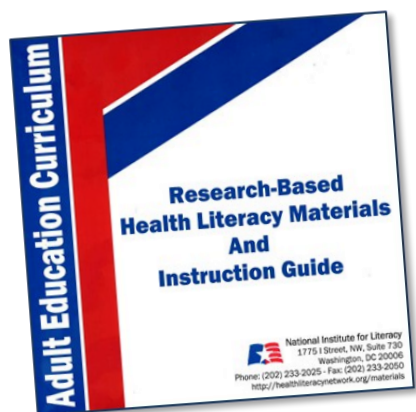
Newspapers in the classroom are always a great tool. To integrate technology and print media and to encourage reading and current events awareness, change your classroom computer homepage to your local newspaper website. *News for You* now has an app available. The website is a great teaching tool for ESL and ABE students. www.newsforyouonline.com

Some of the resources shared in this Technology & Learning Difficulties/Disabilities strand of COABE may not be useful to you in the classroom but definitely many of these websites or apps can be shared with your students to use in their own homes, phones or computer labs.

I hope this information will help you in choosing technology that supports and complements the approaches, needs, and goals of you, your program and your students.

Health Literacy—Talking to Health Professionals

By: Jim Lukesh, Nebraska AE Consultant



The following is a unit, specifically section 9, ESL Lesson 3, from the Health Literacy Curriculum that we have been discussing the past few months.

The following is another example of a portion of a unit from the *Research-Based Health Literacy Materials and Instruction Guide* that is available through your program. If you have seen the materials, you will know what I am talking about as it is a Red, White, and Blue notebook which is about eight inches thick and has Health Literacy Curriculum printed on the spine. If you are not into weightlifting, you can find the materials online at <http://lincs.ed.gov/health/health>

HEALTH UNIT: SECTION 9 CONVERSATION FOCUS Talking to Health Professionals

Directions: The purpose of this activity is to give students confidence asking for clarification or help if they need it. The instructor will role play the part of a health care provider who is giving information orally to a patient. Read the following scripts aloud at a normal, fluent pace.

Student Directions: If you don't understand everything a health care provider tells you, it is important to let them know. Listen to the information from the doctor. Then you will practice asking the doctor any question you may have.

Doctor: Your blood test showed a somewhat elevated blood glucose level. However, to be certain, I want you to take some additional tests. Both tests require that you fast at least 12 hours before taking them. So, the night before the test, finish eating dinner before 7:00 p.m. and then come in at 9:00 a.m. for the test. Okay, do you have any questions?

Doctor: The medicine you've been taking has not been having the effect we've wanted; so I'm going to start you on an extended release tablet. Take one 5-milligram tablet in the morning with breakfast. After two months, we'll recheck your blood and see if we need to increase the dosage then. Do you have any questions?

Doctor: I'd like to start you on a cholesterol-lowering drug. Unfortunately, diet and exercise alone are not enough for some patients to manage their high cholesterol, so we need to treat it with medicine as well. Any questions?

Doctor: There are some side effects with this cholesterol-lowering medicine. Let me know if you experience muscle pain, tenderness or weakness. It will be the kind of pain you would feel if you were coming down with the flu. It might start gradually and you might hardly notice it. How-

ever, you need to tell me about this because it can develop into serious muscle and kidney complications. In addition to watching for muscle pain, you'll be taking blood tests to check your liver function every 3 months. Any questions?

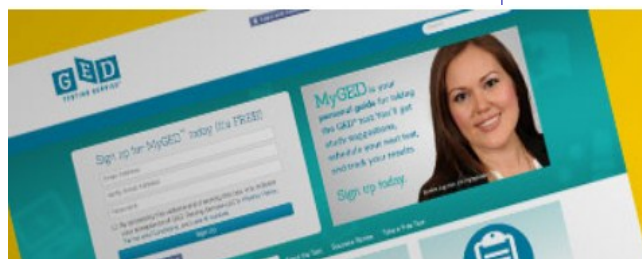
Doctor: We've scheduled your colonoscopy for 8:00 am on Friday. You'll need to get to the hospital by 7:00 am. You should not eat or drink anything after midnight on Thursday. These sheets have all the instructions listed that you'll need to complete before the colonoscopy. It's important that all the instructions be followed. Any questions?

Some possible responses:

- I didn't understand everything. Can you please tell me again a little more slowly?
- What is my main problem?
- What do I need to do?
- Why is it important for me to do this?
- Would you please explain? (blood glucose, fast, dosage, cholesterol, side effects, colonoscopy)
- Can you show me what you mean with a picture?
- Do you have an interpreter who speaks my language?

This is only an example of the material that is available in the Health Literacy Curriculum.

If you are not currently using these materials, request to borrow the book from your program director and check out the material. You and your students have a lot to gain from the curriculum!



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Do You Use LINCS?

By: **Jim Lukesh, Nebraska AE Consultant—jim.lukesh@nebraska.gov**



LINCS (Literacy Information and Communication System) is a professional learning community for adult educators that provides access to free online resources, professional development opportunities, and a connected network of practitioners. LINCS is supported by OVAE, the Office of Vocational and Adult Education of the U.S. Department of Education. <http://lincs.ed.gov>.

As a result of the National Literacy Act of 1991, the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) was created to provide national leadership on adult literacy through improved communication and information exchange. Eight literacy groups were formed to develop standards for creating a national literacy communication and dissemination system and a pilot system for literacy was first launched in August 1994.

The pilot system was developed into the Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS). LINCS was designed to organize and promote resources within the field of adult education and serve as a central repository for information.

NIFL established the LINCS discussion lists in 1995 in order to increase access to electronic information for adult educators, provide a forum for discussion of adult literacy-related policy, and connect the work of NIFL with the field.

The lists developed into a means to share research, knowledge, great resources, and professional development opportunities. In addition, regional centers were created in 1995, known today as Regional Professional Development Centers

(RPDCs), to provide the adult education field with technical assistance, professional development, and information dissemination around the use of LINCS resources. The first comprehensive evaluation of LINCS was conducted by NIFL in 2005 and included an examination of LINCS activities, resources, and infrastructure.

In 2010, LINCS was transferred to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education.

LINCS Community

The LINCS Community is an interactive online social learning space (a community of practice) for conversation, networking, and professional development, which works in tandem with the LINCS Resource Collection and Regional Professional Development Centers to improve evidence-based practice in adult education.

The community, supported by leaders in the field, facilitates increased knowledge sharing and collaboration among adult education leadership, professional developers, administrative staff, and practitioners across the country. Community groups are based on the topic areas in the LINCS Resource Collection.

The LINCS Community provides members with discussion forums, news, events, shared resources, professional development opportunities, and more. The LINCS Community inspires adult education professionals to discuss and refine evidence-based practices, motivating one another to continue to improve not only their practice but also students' education and employment outcomes.

LINCS Resource Collection

The LINCS Resource Collection provides free online access to high-quality, evidence-based, vetted materials to help adult education practitioners and state and local staff

improve programs, services, instruction, and teacher quality. Spanning 15 topic areas, the collection provides relevant instructional resources and professional development materials, as well as research articles, policy briefs, reports, multimedia resources, and more. Information on how to use the featured resources to enhance teaching and learning also is available, as well as limited technical assistance.

Looking Ahead

The U.S. Department of Education is continuing to improve LINCS, emphasizing on-demand access to evidence-based instructional and professional development materials and opportunities, utilizing innovative technologies to reach the widest possible audience.

Registering for LINCS is easy and free. You will be able to use the portal to find professional development resources in sixteen different areas. You will also be able to join a LINCS community through which you will receive updates on topic-specific discussions with fellow educators in your area of interest.

It is suggested that you start out with one or two areas. If you choose all the areas, you will be inundated with materials of interest to the many groups. The information is good but can be "too much of a good thing."

Through the LINCS homepage, you will also find a Learning Portal through which you can access self-paced online courses on an any time anywhere basis. The LINCS homepage also gives you updates on current adult education "hot issues" and features a "What's New" in adult education section.

Visit <http://lincs.ed.gov> and see for yourself. Take time to explore the site; you will find a multitude of good and helpful information for you and your clients.

BEST Plus Trainers Working on Professional Development

By: Jim Lukesh, Nebraska Adult Education Consultant—jim.lukesh@nebraska.gov



Kathy Croson, Carol Leonhardt, and Sharon McClaren, Nebraska trainers for BEST Plus, have met three times in Lincoln, and numerous times electronically, in an effort to provide more professional development for the BEST Plus Test Administrators throughout Nebraska.

The BEST Plus, developed by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), is an individually administered, scripted oral interview designed to assess English language learners' interpersonal communication using everyday language.

BEST Plus is a performance-based test that measures an ESOL learner's oral skills in three areas: Listening Comprehension, Language Complexity, and Communication.

Most of you reading this article probably know what BEST Plus is and, as such, you know the necessity of accuracy in administering the BEST Plus Test. Without accuracy of testing, our clients may be placed at a level where they are overmatched and unable to perform in the classroom or entered at a level well below their competence where they may quickly lose interest.

New test administrators go through an eight-hour orientation and training session before being allowed to administer tests. After that, each test administrator must go through "Recalibration" once each year for three years.

Recalibration is a four-hour training in which the principles of BEST Plus are reiterated and a test is administered. The administrators must successfully complete the test to continue testing. Failure to do so results in more remediation prior to being able to continue testing. After successfully completing Recalibration three times, the test administrators are deemed to have tenure under the current system which is being reviewed in Washington.

In the past, a new test administrator could go up to a year between the initial training and the Recalibration which often led to lapsing into bad habits in testing, especially those administrators who do not give the test on a regular basis.

Our trainers have been meeting in an attempt to solve the problem of new testers going into Recalibration with very little testing experience. This can lead to being scored unacceptable," which is by no means terrible, but calls for remediation. Many new testers in that situation decide to drop out of the program.

The trainers are taking three major steps in an effort to alleviate this problem. The first of which is a process called Verification. Verification is similar to Recalibration but is the

second step in the new administrator process in which the newly trained test administrators return for a second session with the trainer within sixty days of the initial training. This allows for review and remembering and a test of progress.

The first Verification took place this past summer and the results were quite promising as the rate of success of the new administrators was considerably higher than in the past with a year delay before recalibration. Verification will now be a part of the new administrator training process.

The second step which the trainers took is to establish a dedicated email account where test administrators can send questions or comments to the trainers. The email address is nebraskabp@gmail.com. The trainers alternate answering the emails received each month.

The third step, which will be coming in the Spring, is a series of 18 videos in which the trainers will cover various aspects of the BEST Plus test. These short vignettes will be single-concept videos and will be made available on a website so that testers may review periodically to refresh their skills. The trainers will be meeting in January and February to complete the videos.

In the meantime, BEST Plus test administrators should continue to practice and test whenever possible to keep their skills at a high level. Use the email address for any questions that may arise.

NDE Library Materials Available For AE Staff To Check Out



The State AE Office of NDE has a lending library of materials for both AE and ESL. Some are for instructors and others are resources containing practical ideas and exercises to be used with students. www.education.ne.gov/ADED/pdfs/Nebraska_Adult_Education_Lending_Resource_Library.pdf Many of the resources contain EXCELLENT material for students struggling in specific areas. Other materials would make WONDERFUL additions to, or a basis for, staff development sessions. If you would like to preview or discuss any of the materials, just drop in or contact Jim. Materials can be checked out for 6 weeks (longer if not in demand). If you should decide you would like to peruse some, please call or e-mail Jim at: 402/471-4806 jim.lukesh@nebraska.gov

Buzzwords We Love to Hate

A Bit of Humor

By: Jim Lukesh, Nebraska Adult Education Consultant—jim.lukesh@nebraska.gov

From: Meris Stansbury—November 8, 2013 eSchool News, Research, The Words And Phrases We In The Education Biz Love To Hate — <http://www.eschoolnews.com/2013/11/08/education-buzz-words-218/>

This is an article by Meris Stansbury from eSchool News. It does not contain earth-shattering information but is fun to read. See how many of the phrases you use on a regular basis or, how many of them you do not know. In a previous life (job) we played buzzword bingo (secretly) during staff meetings. It did keep everyone alert and in-tuned to the meeting, at least until someone got "bingo."

For those critics who say education moves at a snail's pace, they're wrong...at least when it comes to terminology. From buzz words to phrases speakers love to use, it seems there's a whole new vocabulary—that some call "edubabble"—developed every couple of years.

As education editors, managing editor Laura Devaney and I come across these buzz words frequently, especially over our eight-plus years reporting on education. Now, we'd like to share these words with you, our education-savvy readers!

Each buzz word or phrase is one we've either groaned over after attending a large-scale conference (where every story is littered with "edubabble"), or is one we think was pretty neat...at least while it lasted.

Can you think of any buzz words or phrases that didn't make the list? Do you have a favorite one you love to hate? Or perhaps one you hate but can't stop yourself from using?

And be sure to check out the whole list: we've included a bonus word at the end that you don't want to miss!

Following is a list, in a very rough order, from older words and phrases to some newer ones:

21st-century

We get it: It's about change. But we still have 87 years to go before the next century. We don't think anyone is going to forget what century we're currently in.

Sputnik moment

Almost a decade ago, the talk of education town was the Program for International Student Assessment's (PISA) report on how the U.S. was underperforming compared to other developed countries. "This is our very own 'Sputnik Moment'" said everyone after hearing about PISA's revelations. We don't know about you, but between the nation's emphasis on STEM and LEGO's amazing robotics kits for classrooms, we're Sputnik'ing the heck out of education...and we love it!

Web 2.0

Used to describe web sites that use technology beyond the static pages of earlier websites. Years ago Web 2.0 was used to describe resources and tools schools could use on computers. Just like "tubular," Web 2.0 is now a term of the past.

College- and career-ready

According to education experts, there is a large disconnect between what students learn in school and what they're required to do in the workplace—highlights include critical thinking skills and communication skills. Now, you can't even mention the word 'education' without 'college- and career-ready' popping up in the next two minutes of conversation.

Right-brain thinking

A few years back, Daniel Pink's book, *A Whole New Mind*, was making the education conference rounds and educators couldn't stop discussing "right-brain" thinking, which in-



cluded critical thinking and 'outside-the-box' imagination. We tended to agree!

Future-proofing

Just like words, such as "synergy" or "benchmarking," this buzz term was conceptually pleasing, but annoyed everyone who had to hear it. Future-proofing was especially used in conjunction with 3-D projectors and any other education investment that had a large up-front cost, but promised an equally large return.

Neuroscience

While not a buzz word specific to education, the inclusion of neuroscience into classroom practice was a huge trend just a couple of years ago. While many forward-thinking educators still consider neuroscience, the "new car smell" has dissipated.

Digital Natives

If one more person tells us how amazing it is that their two year old can build his/her own iPad, we may just isolate ourselves and become island natives. Most students are fearless when it comes to technology, and that's great. But let's move on, shall we?

Continued on page 8

Buzzwords We Love to Hate, Continued

Continued from page 7

Real-world/project-based/inquiry-based

As part of closing the gap between school knowledge and workplace knowledge, experts recommend curriculum that asks students to work on a project that simulates a real-world problem. For example, “Meris needs to purchase and consume her Philly cheesesteak before she has a 1:00 interview, which will occur in less than five minutes. What kind of technology-based device can we build to ensure that Meris eats her sandwich in time?”

Disruptive technology

Based on the groundbreaking theory by Clayton Christensen, called Disruptive Innovation, disruptive technology, in relation to education, means any technology currently on the market that can revolutionize the way students learn. A good example of this technology is the iPad, or any other easily accessible mobile tablet.

BYOD/BYOT

Is it wrong that reading this term still makes us think of a nice bottle of Cabernet Sauvignon? Bring Your Own Device, or Bring Your Own Technology—a term meaning that students bring their own smartphones, tablets, or laptops to class—has become so ubiquitous in most schools, that we’ve considered not reminding readers what the acronym stands for in our stories.

Technology for technology’s sake

Reminding educators that implementation of technology should be done effectively, and not just for the ‘new toy’ feeling, is admirable. But just like when our favorite song is repeated every five minutes, we’re getting nauseated at the sound.

Sage on the stage; guide on the side

“Guide on the side you are. Sage on the stage...you are not.” – Master Yoda. The meaning is wonderfully accurate, but the phrase makes us laugh all the same.

Student-centered

Do educators really not consider this? Saying “student-centered” at this point is like saying “breathable oxygen.” It’s rare that it wouldn’t be, right?

Digital literacy

One of the most important concepts created in the last few years that we love to love. From understanding how to safely navigate social media, to understanding how to choose legitimate resources on the internet, every student should be digitally literate. In fact, we think this buzz concept should be in even wider circulation than it is currently.

Flipping

Created by Jon Bergmann and Aaron Sams, Flipped Learning is a popular form of blended learning in which students learn new content online by watching video lectures, usually at home, and what used to be homework (assigned problems) is now done in class with teachers offering more personalized guidance and interaction with students, instead of lecturing.

We think it’s great that teachers are trying something new, but if we get one more email asking us if we’ve heard about flipped learning, we’re going to flip something ourselves.

Common Core-aligned

Note to vendors: We know with 99.9

percent probability that your content is now Common Core-aligned. Whether or not what you say is accurate is another matter.

Big data/data-driven

A couple of years ago, schools across the country invested in software that can generate data on everything in education from monitoring school lunches to tracking bus mileage, and from teacher performance to student achievement. The problem now is what to do with all this data, otherwise known as Big Data. However, data-driven, while a concise phrase, is also becoming too commonplace.

You have to educate to innovate

One of the more current buzz phrases, speakers at conferences and during webinars are beginning to use this phrase to highlight the need for students to become core subject-proficient in order to have creative thoughts that can translate into action. It all began with the White House’s campaign.

Massive Open Online Course

K-12 educators beware: This term is coming to a conversation near you! We sit right next to our higher-education editors and think they haven’t said a word other than MOOC in the last year (it’s been a dull conversation). Not only do MOOCs have the potential to revolutionize higher-education, but high school too.

Tech-savvy

Veteran eSchool News readers, we are aware we use this descriptor way too often! But then again, old habits, and fun words to write, always die slow deaths.

Changes Made to Rule 81

Changes made to Rule 81 (Rules and Regulations for the High School Equivalency Program) will become effective January 1, 2014 — More information coming soon!

http://www.education.ne.gov/Legal/webrulespdf/CLEANRule81_2013.pdf